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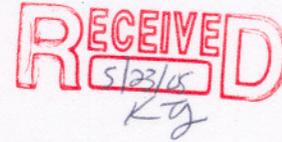
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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

(202) 225-4324

May 18, 2005



The Honorable Anthony Principi, Chairman
Base Realignment and Closure Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations, Springfield ANG Base, Ohio is identified as a realignment facility for the Air Force and the Air National Guard. The language in the BRAC-05 documents also states that the ANG unit at Lackland AFB, Texas is the only F-16 Fighter Training Facility. This statement is incorrect; Springfield is also an F-16 Fighter Training Facility as you will see when you visit, which I hope you will.

The Air National Guard approached me almost six years ago to support the AF/ANG efforts to transition the Springfield ANG Base from a mission capable, general-purpose F-16 fighter unit to a Formal Training Unit for F-16 aircraft. Guard officials said that an investment in the Springfield unit would give that organization a viable mission through the 2015 timeframe, and maybe beyond.

To give some history, the U.S. Air Force diminished its capacity for training fighter pilots during the draw down of the early 1990s; and in the late 90s, the crisis for trained fighter pilots had come front and center. Cash incentives to fighter pilots who had left the service and all other recruiting efforts were failing, and a projected shortfall of almost 2,000 pilots in the AF system existed at that time.

I am a strong supporter of our military, and I feel a strong responsibility to equip and train America's military with the best equipment and facilities available. As a former Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Military Construction Appropriations, I directed significant investments, some of which are just being completed, to the ANG for creating a state of the art F-16 Formal Training Unit at Springfield, Ohio. Consequently, the location is one of the finest Formal Training Units for F-16 pilots in the U.S. Air Force. This unit has consistently and substantially exceeded mission requirements.

It is misleading for the Air Force to deny the existence of this capability at Springfield ANG Base, Ohio. The need to train F-16 pilots will not go away by 2010 as the Air Force has proposed. The need for the capability at Springfield will exist well into 2015, and beyond. This will eventually be realized when the changes at the top of our Air Force leadership are completed, but by then it will be too late!

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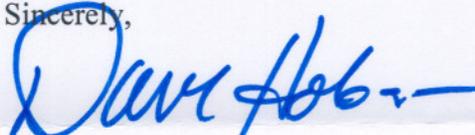
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In light of the discrepancy in Springfield's capability, I request that you visit the facility. New Air Force leadership will change the 2010 artificially-created deadline by the U.S. Air Force to purchase the F-22 and Joint Strike Fighter weapon. This country will extend the life of the F-16 production line and buy block 70 F-16 aircraft to bridge the gap to the weapons of the future. When this happens, it will again be critical that we have the Springfield ANG Base capacity for training the F-16 pilots.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David Hobson
Member of Congress

P.S. I am also skeptical of the financial analysis used to justify the realignment of the mission of the aircraft.

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